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A social studies topic on Peru for fourth-grade children is given. The unit will be presented by creating situations that provoke the children's inquiries. The unit will enable the children to compare and contrast life in Peru with their own experiences and will develop general conceptions about life (for example, that people must adapt to the physical habitat in which they live).

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PERU

Peru is often studied in 4th grade geography as a highland region, and Pizzaro's conquest of the Incas is sure to be touched on in 4th or 5th grade history. However, no brief account of Peru can begin to convey the staggering proportions of her mountains, the contrasts of her deserts and jungles, the thoroughness of the Inca regime over people and land itself, or the desperation of the Indian descendents of the Incas today. Even those children who have already been introduced to Peru in social studies are likely only to have scratched the surface. Moreover, it is probable that the little the children know is not related systematically to basic ideas of physical habitat and human culture, but stands in their minds in fairly disconnected bits of exotica. A study of Peru this summer would have the double object of bringing to life remote phenomena and of exploring the causal patterns that underly them.

We frankly do not know whether the children at Harvard-Boston this summer (or any children, for that matter) will be more interested in things that seem to parallel their experience or with things that stand in sharp contrast to it. The subject of Peru combines both. In the decision of a man whether or not to leave his mountain village for the city, or in the hunger of people, or in cooperative efforts to build new schools and increase crops, we can observe basic human activities and feelings that occur in our own lives. At the same time, the specific shape of these phenomena in Peru is influenced by circumstances very different from our own.

It is suggested that the unit begin with a comparison of life in the mountain villages to our own life in Boston. A story of a Peruvian boy, supplemented by films, slides, and readings, could be the basis for this comparison. Getting food, going to school, working, and going places might be some of the categories compared. The object would be to establish some of the differences and similarities between peasant and urban life, and to discover some of the specific relationships between the lives of Peruvians and the region they inhabit.

The next phase of the unit could go deeper into the situation of the Peruvians today or it could turn back to the time of the Incas. A major problem to be explored in studying the Incas would be what made possible their great achievements, such as the construction of extensive highways and the fact that people never starved under the Incas. The solution to this problem has to do partly with the organization of Inca society, the ways in which every person in the land was involved in the affairs of the kingdom. How much of this can the children this summer induce from material we provide for them, and how much will we need to facilitate their concept formation? This will be an intriguing problem for us as teachers.

In going deeper into the situation today, the children will encounter dire poverty and ignorance in the lives of many Peruvians. Why do the people not live as they did under the Incas? What can be done to change their lives? The children could develop suggestions of their own and then compare them with reports on the Peace Corps, the Cornell-Vicos project, and some of the efforts of the government of Peru in the mountain villages.

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A considerable amount of material on Peru is available for children, but it cannot be used uncritically. Children's authors often give an invalid twist to their story in order to make it more appealing. Likewise, the authors hesitate to expose children to the realities of hunger, fear, or disease. Cavanna's Lucho, for example, tells about a boy who saves the money he earns in a brick yard and eventually spends it on an excursion to Machu Pichu. The description of the boy's work is quite useful, but is it likely that he would have been allowed to save all of his earnings to spend as he wished? Some of these questions we can raise with the children themselves. We can use parts of films or turn the sound off, change stories, excerpt descriptions from anthropological or historical material, and in other ways adapt material to the children's needs and our own criteria.

Objectives:

It will be useful to distinguish between content and process objectives, and to recognize general and more specific aims of each kind.

The more general content objectives would provide the basic conceptual framework of the children's study. In one sense they are ideas to be attained, and in another sense they can be points of departure for the children, that is, these ideas could be explored both inductively and deductively. It is perhaps unlikely that the children will attain ideas of this generality in six weeks; certainly some will not. Nevertheless, it is important to have such ideas as guidelines for our teaching, so that the more proximal goals that we set as we adapt to the children are consistent with the larger understanding they might eventually achieve. While others would certainly emerge during the development of the unit, the following general ideas come to mind at this point, - - not necessarily in the children's language:
(1) People's lives must be adapted to the physical habitat in which they live. What they eat or wear, their idea of comfort or beauty, the skills they develop, are all influenced by their habitat. (2) The culture of a people affects their relationship to their habitat. People's knowledge, their social organization, their idea of property, and their attitudes toward nature and themselves all contribute to this relationship. (3) A culture can be changed by forces from outside. Both The Spanish conquistadores and today's Peace Corpsmen have introduced new ideas and material factors into the lives of Peruvians. (4) Whether the changes brought about in a culture by outsiders are beneficial or harmful depends upon how they relate to the resources, both natural and cultural, of the host people.

The specific content objectives can be as numerous as the children's questions. A few examples of the questions that might occur are these: Why do many Indian children today work at an early age? How did the Inca emperor manage to have a fresh fish from the ocean (more than a hundred miles away) on his table every day? Why did the Incas not starve when frost or earthquake destroyed their crops? What happens to the Indians today when their crops fail? How do we know where the Inca highways were? Etc., etc.

Heathers' characterization of the general process goals of education can be employed for this unit. "Tool skills," for instance in mapwork, may be the easiest for us to envision as teachers and to build into our plans. We will need to create situations that provoke the children's inquiry, such as topographical problems (where would the rivers flow on this model?) or economic and sociological problems (how can you get the Indians today to increase the yield of their potato terraces?). Self-

instruction and self-evaluation are perhaps the most difficult of Heathers' process goals to foster in the classroom. Part of the problem is that information must be made available to the children in a form that facilitates self-instruction and evaluation. One possibility is to construct problem "packages" for the children, each containing a number of items that the children are to relate in various ways. Some development of materials of this sort will be attempted this spring, and the team could develop others this summer.

As with the content, the possibilities for more specific process goals are legion. We will be more aware of them — hypothesising, categorizing, etc. — when we are working through specific problems.

Preliminary readings:

It is crucial that as much as possible of the following be read before we convene this summer at Harvard-Boston.

Bowen, J. David. The Land and People of Peru. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1963. (advanced children's book)

Holmberg, Allan. "Changing Community Attitudes and Values in Peru: A Case Study in Guided Change." Adams et. al., Social Change in Latin America Today. New York: Vintage Books, 1960. Chapter II.